

*from the
auth*



A

S E R M O N

At the Funeral of

THE HONORABLE

Judge F O S T E R.





*The Character and Blessedness of a
diligent and faithful Servant:*

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED AT

BROOKFIELD,

October 19, 1779, at the FUNERAL of

THE HONORABLE

J E D E D I A H F O S T E R ,

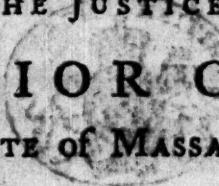
E S Q U I R E ,

ONE OF THE JUSTICES OF THE

S U P E R I O R C O U R T

In the STATE of MASSACHUSETTS;

Who died October 17, 1779, Ætat. 53.

By *NATHAN FISKE*, A. M. 
Pastor of the Third CHURCH in BROOKFIELD.

HIS LORD SAID UNTO HIM, WELL DONE THOU
GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT: THOU HAST BEEN
FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE THEE
RULER OVER MANY THINGS: ENTER THOU INTO
THE JOY OF THY LORD.—MATTHEW 25. 21.

PROVIDENCE:
PRINTED BY BENNETT WHEELER.

the Congress, and by the authority of a
bill which passed the Senate

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ИОМЯН

TA: GENEVIEVE

BROOKFIELD

СЕЧАЯЩИЙ СВЯТЫЕ ПОСЛОВИЦЫ
ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ



Play of the King Charles in Brodway.

УОЛТ ЗИКС ПЛЭЙ. МИХ ВІТИС СІДЕ ПІДОЛІ СІНІ
І НЕСЕ ЧІАН ПОНГУ. ПЛАВАВ ДІМІТІЛІ СІДА ПОСО-
ВІЛІ ЗІКАМ ЗІКІМ. ГОМІНТ ЧА ІІ КІДУ БІЧІГІЛІ
СІМІ УОЛТ ЗІКІМ. ГОЗІНТ ЧА ІІ МАЛІ КІДУ
ІІ. ІІ КІДУТАРІ — ЧІДІ КІДУ 10. 01. 197

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A

FUNERAL SERMON.

LUKE xix. 43.

Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing.

OUR divine Master, who earnestly desired and endeavored the Instruction, Sanctification and Salvation of Mankind, had just been giving some important Counsel and Advice to the People that attended Him, respecting their Preparation for the coming of the Son of Man. Having endeavored to detach their Minds and Pursuits from the Earth and its Enjoyments, He exhorts them, v. 31, "to seek rather the Kingdom of God," assuring them that "all these Things," i. e. all the Necessaries of Life, "shall be added unto them." And to quicken their Diligence in accomplishing the Work assigned them, so as to meet their Lord with Decency, Composure and Delight, He adds this Advice in the 36th v. "Let your Loins be girded about and your Lights burning." This refers to the Custom which then obtained, for Servants to sit up for their Masters, when necessarily absent till late in the Night, and to
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the Vigilance and active Posture with which they waited for them. They had their Loins girded about, that so the long Garments which they wore, need not entangle nor retard them ; and their Lights burning, that no Hindrance or Inconvenience might arise ; that so when their Lords arrived, they should not have so much as to strike a Light, or even to tuck up their Clothes, but immediately to wait upon them.* In this Sense it is explained in the following Words ; “ And ye yourselves like unto Men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the Wedding : that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” This Parable is continued, the better and more forcibly to recommend Watchfulness and Diligence in the Christian Life, and to set forth, in a more striking Light, the Felicity of those who are found thus employed : “ Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching, &c.” After making use of another Similitude, by way of Illustration and Enforcement, our Lord concludes the Whole with this important Exhortation, “ Be ye therefore ready also ; for the Son of Man cometh at an Hour when ye think not.” — Peter not being certain whether this Parable and the Instructions couched therein, had any further Reference than to his Fellow-Disciples, asks this Question, “ Lord, speakest thou this Parable unto us, or even to all ?” This led our Saviour further to recommend, and inculcate on his Hearers, Fidelity in the Service, and Watchfulness for the coming, of their Lord and Master.

* Vide Dodd, in loc.

Master. "Who then is that faithful and wise Steward, whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, to give them their Portion of Meat in due Season? Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing." These Words, though most frequently applied to the Ministers of the Gospel, are also applicable to Magistrates and all other Denominations of Men, every one of which has a certain Sphere of Duty assigned him, which he is diligently and faithfully to discharge, being actuated by a Concern to approve himself to his Master, to benefit his Fellow-Servants, and to be found of his Judge in Peace. Whoever is appointed to any Office or Trust in the great Family of God (and there is no Person that is not appointed to some) is under Obligation to Diligence and Fidelity; and this is his highest Wisdom, Honor and Happiness; for if he continue "so doing" till his Lord's Arrival, he shall be "blessed," and receive an ample Reward.

I shall consider the following Things, as comprehending the Sum of the Instruction contained in the Text, taken in Connection with the Rest of Christ's Discourse.

- I. That all Mankind are the Servants of God.
- II. They are bound to be faithful in the Discharge of the several Duties assigned them.
- III. The Lord Jesus Christ will come to take an Account of his Servants.

IV.

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IV. These Servants shall be pronounced blessed, and made forever happy, who shall be found diligently and faithfully employed, when their Lord arrives.

I. All Mankind are the Servants of God.

As God is the first Cause, and the last End of all Things; as every Thing that has Existence was made by him and for him, all Creatures may be considered as his Servants. The whole Universe is the Household of God: He sits at the Head of the Family—appoints unto every Creature its Rank and Business;—to some a higher, and to others a lower Office, and requires them all to serve him. The Psalmist speaking of the Earth and its Appurtenances, says, “They continue this Day according to thine Ordinances; for all are thy Servants.”* The human Race are the Creatures of his Hand, the Subjects of his Government, and Servants in his Family. He is the Former of our Bodies, and the Father of our Spirits, and furnished us with all those Powers which render us capable of serving him, and of enjoying Happiness ourselves, or communicating it to others. He upholds our Souls in Life, and gives us Scope and Opportunity for the Exercise and Improvement of our various Faculties. So that God hath a more absolute Right to us, than the Potter hath to the Clay, which he hath purchased with his Money, fashioned by his Skill, and preserved by his Care. No earthly Prince, no Parent, no Master, hath such

* Psalm 119, 91.

such an indisputable Claim to the Obedience of his Subject, his Child, or his Slave, as God hath to ours.' Our whole Time, from our first commencing moral Agents, till God dismisses us from our Post—every Talent, and all the various Uses and Improvements we can make thereof, ought to be dedicated to that Being from whom we received them, "whose we are, and whom we ought to serve." And God has a Right to us, not only as we are his Creatures, but as we are his preserved—his redeemed—his infinitely obliged—and the most of us, his dedicated Creatures : We are his purchased Possession. Since then we are the Lord's, by Ties so various and strong, it is our indispensable Duty to acknowledge and demean ourselves as such.

But though we are all the Servants of God, we have not all the same Capacity, nor Station, nor Employment in his Household. Nothing is more obvious than the Diversities of Gifts, Situations, Occupations, and Circumstances of Mankind. Some are Stewards and Overseers in God's Family, and are appointed to direct, and give Orders to subordinate Servants. Some are exalted to Places of Trust and Authority in Church or State; while others revolve in a lower Sphere, and have only to execute the Commands of their Superiors.

And as the external Situations and Circumstances of Men are various, so are their intellectual Powers and Advantages. Some are endowed with a superior Genius, Understanding,

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Memory, Judgment, or Knowledge; while others have only that which is common, and others scarcely that. Some, by their natural and acquired Endowments, are fitted for Counsel and Legislation; others for Execution: Some to sit in Judgment; and others to plead at the Bar: Some for the Propagation and Defence of the Gospel: Some to lead, and others to compose Armies: And some only for the common Employments of Life; where indeed, by Honesty and Industry, they may be greatly useful, and answer the Demands of their great Master.—All this Variety and Gradation in the several Ranks and Capacities of Men, is not the Effect of undesigning Chance; but the Result of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, for the Advantage, Security and Perfection of Societies small and great; and of Mankind in general. One Man is not, in any Respect, exalted above his Brethren, by mere Accident; but according to the Appointment of him, who is “wonderful in Counsel and excellent in working.” For “Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South: But God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.”^{***} A Being of infinite Knowledge and Wisdom, as well as of Goodness and Power, sits at the Head of the Universe, and holds the Reins of universal Government in his Hands. His Kingdom ruleth over all: And ’tis he that conducteth the Affairs of this World, though by subordinate Agents of various Turns, Tempers, Offices and Abilities. “The Kingdom is the Lord’s, and He

* Psalm 75, 6, 7.

He is the Governor among the Nations." Whoever is capable of observing must see that the different Dispositions, and Capacities of Mankind, and their different Stations and Circumstances in Life, are Means in the Hand of Providence, for the Regulation, Improvement, and great Emolument both of Individuals and of Societies. The Possession of Talents, and of Talents differing in Number and Value from those possessed by others, is from Him who made us what we are: And He that made us what we are, made us for some wise Purpose—for carrying on some Part of the Business of God's Family, that the Good of the Whole may be the better promoted. He who gave us our Talents and Rank in his Household, gave us also these Commands, " Occupy till I come,"—be "not slothful in Business but fervent in Spirit serving the Lord." Which brings me to the next Observation, viz.

II. The Servants of God are bound to be faithful in the Discharge of the several Duties assigned them.

Diligence and Fidelity are justly required of all Servants; especially of those who are under the strongest Engagements to their Master in Heaven. "A Son honoreth his Father, and a Servant his Master: if then I be a Father, where is mine Honor? And if I be a Master, where is my Fear? Saith the Lord of Hosts."* Be we high or low, learned or ignorant, Rulers or Subjects, Masters or Servants, Parents or Children, in the Church or in the State, there is

* Malachi, i. 6.

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is some Duty incumbent on us in that Situation, which we are faithfully to perform—something for us to do in the Service of God and our Generation. And what this Duty and Service is, may be learned from our Talents, Connections and Sphere of Action. To fill up our Places and Stations, and discharge faithfully the Duties arising out of them, according to our Abilities, is required of all. And in Proportion to our Abilities, Endowments, and Opportunities, are God's and the Public's Expectations and Demands from us. The more Talents—the greater Powers—the higher Office, any are intrusted with, the greater are their Obligations ; and of course the greater their Guilt if they abuse and misimprove them. Negligence, Unfaithfulness, and Sloth, in any Members of Society, especially in the more important Ones, is injurious to the complicated Household, and greatly displeasing to the Supreme Head. This is what our Saviour declares in the Sequel of this Discourse : “ And that Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few Stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required : And to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”—If we are placed in any public Station either in Church or State, the Duties of that Station are to be faithfully discharged : The divine Being, by placing us in that Sphere of Action, has put a Price into our Hands to promote the general Good ;

Good ; and we should have a Heart to it, and diligently improve it. And if we are only in a private Capacity, we are so to demean ourselves in the Relations in which we stand, as the Nature of those Relations requires. As Subjects, we are conscientiously to obey the just and constitutional Laws of the Land ; pay due Honor and Submission to those that are in Authority, and promote, as much as we can, the Peace and Interest of Society, both civil and ecclesiastical. As Masters of Families, we must take care of those committed to our Charge, endeavoring to make them comfortable and useful in this World, and happy in the next. As Husbands and Wives, we are to be stedfast in the marriage Covenant, and discharge with Fidelity the several conjugal Duties. As Friends, and Neighbours and private Christians, we should be courteous and obliging, and full of Benevolence to all about us, contributing all in our Power to render the Lives of others more easy and comfortable, more virtuous and exemplary. A contrary Temper and Behaviour to this must be highly displeasing to the Parent and Master of the Universe, who delights to see his Children and Servants united, benevolent and happy. This appears from what our Lord says a Verse or two after our Text : " But and if that Servant say in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming ; and shall begin to beat the Men Servants and the Maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken : The Lord of that Servant will come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and at an Hour when he is not ware, and will cut him in funder, and will appoint him his Portion with the Unbelievers." But

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But in Order to be faithful in the Discharge of the Duties we owe to our Fellow-Servants, we must act from Principles of Piety; from Love to God and Regard to his Will. And this leads me to speak of Fidelity to our Master in those Duties which we owe more immediately to him. We must acknowledge and glorify God as our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer and Benefactor:—Venerate and adore his super-eminent Attributes;—stand in Awe of his Power and Majesty;—revere his Justice, confide in his Veracity and Faithfulness, admire and imitate his Mercy and Goodness, and always act under an influential Sense of his Omnipresence and Omniscience.—Moreover, if we would faithfully discharge all the Duties incumbent on us as the Servants of God, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; acknowledging him to be the only begotten Son of God; the only Way, the Truth and the Life, through whom alone we can have Access to the Father in Prayer, or find Admission into his Presence hereafter. We must learn from his Instructions and Example, confide in his Merits, and submit to his Government. Being bought with a Price, even with his most precious Blood, we must glorify him in our Bodies, and in our Spirits which are his.—Our thus living in all good Conscience towards God will be the proper Ground and Motive of our living in all good Conscience towards Men. From the Principles of Love to God and Faith in Christ, a faithful Servant will diligently serve his Generation. That Man alone will be pronounced and made blessed, at the Appearance of

of Christ, who from religious Principles hath carefully considered the Duties of his Station, and honestly discharged them, and thereby endeavored to please God and benefit Society. If we are destitute of a proper Regard to the Perfections and Government of God, our own Interest will always predominate, and influence our Conduct; and we shall not serve our Generation, any farther than we can serve ourselves by it. But if the Fear and Love of God prevail in our Hearts, they will make us good and faithful Servants in the whole Extent of our Duty; faithful to God and our Redeemer; faithful to our Neighbour and ourselves, and faithful to the Death.

III. The Lord Jesus Christ will come and take an Account of his Servants—“ His Lord when he cometh.”

This Expression may refer either to *Death* or *Judgment*. Both these Events are pointed out by such Phrases as these, *the coming of the Son of Man*, *the coming of Christ*, &c. We are to continue in Service in God’s Family below, but a limited Time: And when this Time is expired, and we have accomplished as an Hireling our Day, we are dismissed; we must render an Account of our Conduct in order to receive our Wages. “ The Lord cometh and reckoneth with those Servants.”

Some have a longer, and some a shorter Day of Trial and Service. Our Lord cometh to one at the first Watch, to another at the Second, to another at the Third. But no

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Servant knows beforehand at what Hour his Lord will come. It concerns him, therefore, to be vigilant and active, if he would be found of him in Peace, and entitled to his Approbation. For after Death, there will be no retrieving our Neglect, or making up lost Time, or appeasing our Master with the Tears of Penitence. "After Death is the Judgment." Such as we are when our Lord cometh to dismiss us from Life and its Services, such shall we be when he cometh to judge and reward us.

That the great Observer of Men will some Time or other call us to account how we have conducted ourselves, while in his terrestrial Family, and how we have discharged the Duties of our several Stations and Characters in Life, is evident both from Reason and Scripture. Our very make and Constitution, our Sentiments and Feelings, shew us to be accountable Creatures. Reason and Conscience declare this with a Voice that may be heard, and an Energy that may be felt by all. The Light of Nature teaches us that he who created the World and its Inhabitants, exercises a providential Government over them; and that he who inspects and governs the World, and hath put such Powers, such Laws, and such Feelings into Men, will some Time or other, bring them before him, and make strict Enquiry how they have spent their Lives, and improved their Capacities. And not to call them to an Account after their Time was out, would be hardly reconcileable with those Ideas which the Light of Nature teaches us to form of the Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness

Goodness of the Supreme Being. "The righteous Lord loveth Righteousness and hateth Iniquity" in his Creatures as well as in himself; and consequently will approve and reward the one, and punish the other. But it is evident to every one that is acquainted with the present State of Things, that there is no public, striking Difference and Distinction made between the Righteous and the Wicked, in this World. With regard to the Sufferings and Enjoyments of this Life, "as is the Good, so is the Sinner." Nay, sometimes the Wicked prosper, while many are the Afflictions of the Righteous. Undoubtedly then, a Time is approaching, in which he who now superintends the World with an impartial Eye, will judge it in Righteousness, and fully vindicate the Equity of his moral Government, and demonstrate to all Beings his Love of Holiness and his Abhorrence of Sin, by an open Distribution of Rewards and Punishments according to the *well* or *ill* deserving of moral Agents.—But whatever Uncertainties attend this Point from the Light of Nature, the Light of Revelation assures us, that "every one must give Account of himself unto God." The New-Testament abounds with Declarations that our Lord and Master will call us to his Tribunal; that "we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ;" that when he cometh, "his Reward is with him, to give to every Man according as his Work shall be;" that after the general Resurrection, "the Dead shall be judged out of those Things that are written in the Book" of God's Remembrance; and that "the Wicked shall go away into ever-

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I lasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal."* This brings me to the last Observation, viz.

IV. That those Servants shall be blessed and happy who shall be found diligently and faithfully employed when their Lord arrives.

"Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing;" active in Duty, and vigilant in waiting for his Master's Arrival. He that is "so doing" shall be blessed, let his Lord call for him at what Hour he will. "And if he shall come in the second Watch, or come in the third Watch, and find them so, blessed are those Servants." This Blessedness is made up of several Ingredients.— Such a diligent and faithful Servant shall be blessed with inward Peace and Satisfaction.— Nothing lays so sure and solid a Foundation for Self-Approbation, and a joyful Hope of the Approbation of our Lord, as a Consciousness of having, through Grace, been faithful to God and our Saviour, and faithful in the Discharge of all relative Duties, from religious Principles. "This," says St. Paul, "is our Rejoicing, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World."† And though by our Works we are not justified before God, yet by these is our Faith made perfect, and

* Rom. xiv. 10. Rev. xxii. 12. and xx. 12. Mat. xxv. 46.

† 2. Cor. i. 12.

and proved to be genuine. And the greater our Usefulness among Men, as well as the more perfect our Obedience to the divine Will, the greater is our Conformity to our blessed Master, and the greater will be our Interest in his Love. And if we have that Faith in God and Christ, which worketh by Love, and influences to unfeigned Obedience, we shall be justified from all Things, from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses, or the Law of Nature. And being justified by Faith, we shall have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Peace in our own Consciences, Joy in believing, and shall rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.

Such diligent and faithful Servants have a stable Foundation for Hope and Comfort in Death. Being able to say with *Hezekiah* of old, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which was good in thy Sight,"* they may adopt the Words of the Apostle *John*, "Now are we the Sons of God; and" though "it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."† Having "fought the good Fight, finished their Course, and kept the Faith;" having improved their Talents, been faithful in their Trusts, and occupied till their Lord come, they feel themselves "now ready to be offered," and to be able to "give up their Accounts with Joy."—Death shall be so far from separating them from the Love of Christ, that it shall entirely

* 2. Kings, xx. 3. † 1. John, iii. 2.

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tirely free them from the Body of Sin, and usher them, without Spot, into the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy. Their Bodies shall sleep in Jesus; and them shall God bring with him when he cometh to Judgment.—And in that Day of Decision, when small and great shall stand before God, their Righteousness shall be brought forth as the Light and their Judgment as the Noon-day. Their Judge shall place them at his Right Hand, pronounce them blessed, and welcome them into the Joy of their Lord. There are Pleasures without Allay, and Joys that never fade. There all Tears shall be wiped away, and all their Wishes and Desires compleatly satisfied. There they shall see God:—walk up and down in the Light of his Countenance, and be transported with his Love to all Eternity.—“Blessed,” indeed, “is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” “Blessed are the Dead, who die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.” “Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.” “Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.”*

The Way being thus prepared, let us now attend to a few practical Inferences and Reflections, suitable to the Subject and the present mournful Occasion.

i. We

* Rev. xiv. 13. xxii. 14. and ii. 10. *

1. We learn from what we have heard, that a Life of Religion is a Life of Activity. It is the industrious, faithful, vigilant, persevering Servant, that is commended and rewarded; the slothful, careless, unkind, and wicked Servant, is condemned and punished. That Life which is preparatory to, and will be crowned with, immortal Honor and Blessedness, is a Life of indefatigable Service; a Life of sincere Devotion and Piety towards God, and Usefulness among Men;—a Life, in which all our Talents and Advantages are diligently improved; and all incumbent Duties, which we owe to our Maker, our Redeemer, our Neighbour, and ourselves, conscientiously performed. This Consideration should rouse us from our Sloth, and stimulate us to double our Diligence, to redeem the Time, to strain every Nerve in working the Works of him that sent us into the World, and to look out, and prepare, for the coming of our Lord.

2. Our Subject teaches us, that Christians are employed by a most bountiful Master. The God whom they serve, is the God of Grace, and the God of Salvation. He not only endows them with various Talents and Capacities—assigns them their proper Sphere of Business—and gives them necessary Orders and Directions; but supplies them at present with Spirit and Strength for their Work—supports and gladdens them with innumerable intermingled Satisfactions—allures them along by holding up to their View the promised glorious Reward,—and by giving them the most undoubted Assur-

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rance, that their imperfect Services, if sincere and constant, shall not only be applauded by their Judge, in Presence of the congregated World, but be rewarded with an Eternity of the most refined and exalted Happiness.

Hence 3. The Consideration of the Blessedness of those, who are the faithful Servants of God, should animate us to go through our Service with the greatest Resolution and Cheerfulness, notwithstanding the Self-denials and Pains, or the Ingratitude and Reproach, that are often to be borne. The Service of God, indeed, is the greatest Freedom,—the Work of Religion a delightful Work,—the Ways of Wisdom are Ways of Pleasantness,—and, to a benevolent Mind, the promoting the Virtue and Happiness of Mankind, an agreeable Employment; yet are there many Things to be met with in this Vale of Tears that are irksome to Flesh and Blood, and hard to be endured. Sometimes our Stedfastness in our Profession, and Adherence to our Lord and Master, is put to a severe Trial; and sometimes our Fortitude and Patience, in going through difficult and hazardous Duties for the Benefit of others. “But none of these Things should move us, neither should we account our Lives dear unto ourselves, so that we may finish our Course with Joy.” Let us not suffer ourselves to be diverted, impeded or disheartened, in our Career of Service, with Respect to our Master, or Fellow-Servants, by any Danger or Difficulty; but look forward to the promised Blessedness. “Behold I come quickly,” saith our Supreme Lord,

Lord, " and my Reward is with me, to give every Man according as his Work shall be." " Hold that fast which thou hast, that no Man take thy Crown." " He that endureth to the End, the same shall be saved."

4. What we have heard should turn our Eyes and our Thoughts inward upon ourselves, to see whether we are the faithful, vigilant Servants of God our Saviour, and what Grounds we have to expect a Benediction when our Master arrives. Have we such a Sense of the Authority which God has over us, and his Right to our constant and zealous Services, as constrains us to devote ourselves, our Time and Talents, to be employed for his Glory ? Are we sincerely engaged in the Duties we owe to God, to Christ, and to Mankind ? Do we " give all Diligence, adding to our Faith, Virtue ; and to Virtue, Knowledge ; and to Knowledge, Temperance ; and to Temperance, Patience ; and to Patience, Godliness ; and to Godliness, brotherly Kindness ; and to brotherly Kindness, Charity ? " " Are we so stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord ? " Are we careful to leave Nothing undone, which is in the Power of our Hands to do, in advancing the Honor and Interest of our Master, and the Welfare of his Household, and which we shall wish we had done, when our Lord cometh to reckon with his Servants ? Are we watchful for his coming, and concerned lest he find us sleeping, instead of so doing ? In fine, should he come this Night, could we rationally expect he would pronounce us blessed ?

5. Our

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ev 5. Our Subject administers Consolation to those Mourners, who have committed, or are committing to the Dust, their dearest and best Friends, who have been the faithful Servants of God and their Generation. "Blessed is that Servant, whom is Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing." Yea, we are assured, that the conscientious Servants of Christ, shall in no wise lose their Reward, let their Master come late or early.—We may be Losers by the Departure of our virtuous Friends, but they themselves are no Losers.—A Family meets with an irreparable Loss, when the wise and pious Head of it, is removed by Death. The Wife loses her bosom Friend and Companion,—her Stay and Support,—the Heightner of her Comforts and Joys,—the Partner of her Cares and Sorrows,—and the Promoter of her spiritual Interest.—The Children lose an Instructor and Guide of their Youth; one who naturally, and most affectionately cared for their State, both in this World and another;—their Example and Monitor,—and one who daily commended them to God in his Prayers.—When a Church loses one of its principal Members, who, by his exemplary Behaviour, adorned and recommended Religion, and by his wise Counsels greatly benefited the Church, what a Frown must it be esteemed?—When a Town is deprived by Death, of a Person, upon whose Wisdom and Integrity it depended, to conduct its most important Affairs, and secure its essential Interests, how wide is the Breach!—And when the Public loses a firm and steady Patriot,—an able Statesman,—a wise Counsellor,—and an upright Judge,

Judge, how extensive, how widely felt, how deeply to be lamented the Loss !—In all these Respects, and under all these Views, is the Death of the honorable Judge *FOSTER* to be considered, whose funeral Obsequies we are now mournfully attending. All these, and many more Circumstances, serve to aggravate the Loss, and heighten the Grief of the widowed Partner, who before this happened, was staggering under a Weight of Sorrow almost insupportable.*

We grieve with you, Madam, under this recent, this redoubled, this most affecting Stroke !—While your Cheeks were yet wet with Tears for the Loss of an amiable Daughter, the Fountains are again opened, and even exhausted, by the Death of a beloved Husband.—While your Heart was yet bleeding for your Child snatched from your Arms, it is now even rent asunder for your Companion torn from your Bosom !—But though there are Circumstances attending your Case, peculiarly mournful ; yet are there not Considerations peculiarly consoling ! The moral Endowments—the bene-

D volent

* *Mrs Abigail Foster*, eldest Daughter of Judge *Foster*. died less than three Months before her Father, viz. on July 25th, in the 24th Year of her Age. She was a Lady of an excellent Mind and superior Accomplishments ; an Ornament and Example to her Sex, in the Sweetness of her Temper, and the Circle of Graces and Virtues exhibited in her daily Practice. So great was her Familiarity with Death, and Attemperedness for Heaven, that, when possessed with a Persuasion that she should not live long, even before she was attacked by the Distemper of which she died, as well as during the painful Progress of it, her Serenity, her Faith, her Fortitude, her Patience, continued unshaken ; and she rejoiced in Hope of the Glory of God.

volent Exertions—the Christian Graces, which rendered your Friends useful and dear on Earth, attempered them for Heaven. The endearing Qualities of the Husband—the Father—the Companion—the Friend—the Patriot—and the Christian, are “ acceptable to God,” as well as “ approved of Men,” and will in no wise lose their Reward. The useful Man—the faithful Servant of God and his Generation, shall receive the felicitating Euge, and a Crown of Glory. While you mourn therefore, Madam, for yourself, and your surviving Children, you will mourn with Moderation, because “ not without Hope,” nor without an agreeable Mixture of sweetening Ingredients in your Cup of Affliction, bitter as it is. You are not only blessed with a happy Steadiness and Presence of Mind, similar to that of your deceased Partner’s, as a Balance to the tender Passions, but, we trust also, with the Supports of Religion, the Smiles of God’s Countenance, and the Consolations of the Spirit, which are neither few nor small. Our Heart’s Desire and Prayer to God is, that these Comforts may continue and abound; and that the special Promises that are made to the Widow and the Fatherless, may be made good to you and to your Children.—For the bereaved Sons we cannot wish a greater Blessing, than that they may continue to be “ Plants of Renown;”—may emulate, more and more, the Character of their worthy Father;—may be equally useful—equally esteemed—and equally rewarded:—That, under the Influence of Religion, and the Stimulus of Benevolence, they may go on in a Course of active Services, to a

much

much later Period than their lamented Parent; and then, depart in Peace, as he did, with the Applauses of Conscience—the Applauses of their Country—and meet with the Applauses of the Supreme Judge.—And with regard to the only surviving Daughter, we wish she may be continued a Comfort to her mourning Parent, and an Ornament to her Sex:—That she may shine in the united Accomplishments and Virtues of her departed Sister, and honored Mother;—that being convinced that “all Flesh is Grafs, and the Glory of Men as the Flower of the Field;” that as “the Grafs withereth, and the Flower fadeth,” so human Flowers, however beautiful and fragrant, may wither and drop before it is Noon;—that being mindful of this, she may cultivate those Graces and Habits of Goodness, that Familiarity with Death and the World of Spirits, and that Acquaintance with God and divine Things, which will render *her* also elevated in her Hopes and Conversation—fearless of dying—and fitted for a blissful Eternity.

As to this Parish—this Town—and the Public, how shall I describe their Loss in the Death of Judge *FOSTER*, or suggest Consolation under it!—How speak of it, but to resolve it into the Will of God, who knows what is best—in whom we may confide that he will take Care of his own Cause in the World, though the Instruments of its Support are taken away—and who requires our dutiful Submission to his sovereign Will, even in those Dispensations which are dark and mysterious!—“*The*

Supreme

28 *A Sermon at the Funeral of*

Supreme Wisdom saw this fit ; and the Supreme Wisdom cannot err !”—“ Be still,” says the Almighty Ruler, “ and know that I am God.”

I feel myself unequal to the Task of characterizing this great and useful Man, according to his acknowledged Merit : But cannot forbear reflecting with Esteem and Satisfaction upon what he *was* ;—and with the deepest Regret that he *is no more*.—Like the Servant who received “ five Talents” from his Lord, he improved them all to the Honor of the Donor, and the Benefit of his Fellow-Creatures. So great were his Abilities both natural and acquired—so extensive his Acquaintance with Men and Things—so sound his Judgment—so good his Heart—so upright his Intentions—so strong his Attachment to the Rights and Liberties of his Country and of Mankind—and so active and zealous in defending and securing them, that few have been more employed, more confided in, or done more good. So much Dependence was had upon his Judgment and Integrity, by this and the neighbouring Towns, to advise, direct and transact, that we are now ready to look round in Despair, and say, where shall we hence forward find one to manage our important Concerns—to counsel us in our Perplexities—to encourage our Hearts with the Prospect of Success and Prosperity when adverse Occurrences threaten Ruin to our Land—to prevent or cure, by his pacific Disposition, his mild and judicious Address, unhappy Dissentions—in short, to be as the Soul and Understanding, to give our political Affairs a right Motion and Direction ?—So great was

our

our Confidence in his Wisdom and Uprightness, that in his Hands we thought our civil Concerns and those of the Public, not only safe, but improving.—The Fidelity and Honor with which he served his Country in the various important Offices he filled, as a Member of the General Assembly, in which he sat for a long Succession of Years—as a Counsellor—as a Judge of the Courts, Inferior, Superior and Probate—as one of the Committee of Convention for constructing a Form of Government for this State, are universally acknowledged. This last Trust indeed, he lived not to execute; a fatal Disease depriving the Public of his further Assistance, and himself of the Happiness of seeing a wise Model of Government established, and the Freedom and Independence of his Country secured.—It was his Study to be useful, and his fixt Opinion, that no Man should desire to live longer than he could be so. But he was summoned in the Midst of his Usefulness—in the Midst of his active Services for the public Good, and when his Friends and his Country could but ill spare him. “ His Lord when he came, found him so doing.” But I must leave it to abler Pens, to give a more full, and adequate Character of the Man, who when living, was so justly and universally esteemed, and being now dead, is so justly and universally lamented: And only add, That so great a Frown of Providence, as the Death of such a Person must be, upon this Town and Country, calls for our Humility and Lamentation; and for our earnest Application to the great Repairer of Breaches, and who hath the Residue of the Spirit, that he would

would sanctify this Loss to us and to the Public, as well as to the bereaved Family; and that he would raise up and qualify others to stand in the Gap, and do worthily for God and for their Generation.

To CONCLUDE,

Let us all, both old and young, high and low, rich and poor, be solicitous to know what the Lord would have us to do, and do it with our Might. We know not how short our Time is, nor how near our Master. Instead therefore of saying, "my Lord delayeth his coming," and so venturing upon criminal Indulgences, or any injurious Treatment of our Fellow-Servants, or sinking into Sloth and Idleness, let us give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, that we may be found of our Judge in Peace. We see one and another of our Neighbours and Acquaintance, some of the higher as well as lower Servants in God's Family, called to give up their Account: "We see that wise Men die, as well as the Fool and Brutish." Our Turn will soon come; and as we know not how soon, we must "take heed, watch and pray." Let us not therefore, "be slothful, but Followers of those, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises. Let our Loins be girded about, and our Lamps burning, and we ourselves like unto Men who wait for their Lord. "Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

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F I N I S H E D

BOSTON

A P P E N D I X.

tigable, in his Opposition to the despotic Measures of Britain against the American States; and so great was his Intrepidity, that he never was once heard to express a Doubt of the Success of their Cause. It is but Just, further to mention his strict Regard to Morals, as founded on the System of the Christian Religion, of which he was an early and exemplary Professor. It is difficult to determine, whether his amiable and sorrowful Consort and bereaved Children, or the Government, to which his Services were so entirely devoted, most feel the Loss.

From the BOSTON GAZETTE, of November 9,
1779.

BOSTON, October 31, 1779.

ON Sunday the 17th of October Instant, at Half after one o'Clock, departed this Life, at his House in Brookfield, the Honorable JEDEDIAH FOSTER, Esq; Member of the General Assembly for that Town, and a Justice of the Superior Court throughout this State. On Tuesday following his Remains were respectfully interred, having been previously conveyed to the Rev. Mr. Ward's Meeting-House, where a Sermon suitable to the Occasion was delivered to a large Concourse of People, by the Rev. Mr. Nathan Fisk, from this Text, Luke xii. 43, "Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

As



APPENDIX
EXTRACTS from the public Papers,
printed at Boston,

From the INDEPENDENT CHRONICLE, published
at Boston, October 28, 1779.

DIED at Brookfield, on the 17th Instant, the Honorable JEDDEIAH FOSTER, Esq; one of the Justices of the Superior Court of this State, in the 53d Year of his Age. He in his Youth, after having received an Education at Harvard College, was called into public Life. He sustained military Offices from a Captain up to a Colonel of a Regiment. He served his Country with Approbation in the Offices of a Justice of the Peace, Judge of Probate, Justice of the Inferior and Superior Courts. For many Years he represented the Town of Brookfield at the General Court, which now, in an especial Manner, feels his Loss. While in Council, he attracted a Veneration due to that Office when held with singular Ability, and a strict Regard to the Rights and Happiness of the People. He was early in the true Politics of his Country, and his Attachment to her Interest and Freedom was exceeded by none. He was zealous, firm, and indefatigable,

APPENDIX.

As a very considerable Part of Judge Foster's Life was spent in the Service of the Public, and was a continual Exhibition of those Virtues which render their Possessors the Light and the Ornament of their Generation, perhaps a short Sketch of his Life and Character may not be unacceptable to his grateful Country.

He was born at Andover, on Merimack River, October 10, 1726, descended from an antient and reputable Family (REGINALD FOSTER's*) who came from England A. D. 1636, on Account of the Troubles in the Reign of Charles I. His Friends gave him a liberal Education, which he duly improved at Harvard College, where he commenced Bachelor in the Arts, A. D. 1744, in the 18th Year of his Age, and had regularly conferred on him the other Honors of the College.

Not long after he left College he settled at Brookfield, and married the second Daughter of the Honorable Brigadier-General JOSEPH DWIGHT, Esq; of that Place. Here obtaining

* This Gentleman REGINALD FOSTER was born in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, at Exeter, in England, the latter End of the Fifteenth Century, and was descended of the same Family with Sir REGINALD FOSTER, who was made a Baronet of England July 21st, A. D. 1661, mentioned in the 30th Edition of Chamberlayne's Present State of Great-Britain, and in the Heraldry Books of the English. He brought with him to America his Wife, with five Sons and two Daughters, with whom he settled at Ipswich, Eastward of Boston.—All his Children, as well as himself, lived to old Age.—All married and had large Families, from whom have risen a numerous Progeny, now settled in different Parts of the United States of America.

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a Character for Integrity, Ability and Fidelity, he was soon intrusted with the most important Offices in the Town, and had the principal Direction of their Affairs until the Year 1760, when he was elected their Representative in the General Assembly, of which he was uninterruptedely a Member for Fifteen Years. During this Period, while the political Storm was gathering, which has since overwhelmed Europe and America with War and Bloodshed, he manifested on all Occasions a uniform and fixed Attachment for the Rights and Liberties of his Country.

The public Offices he has sustained in this State are, an incontestable Proof of the high Estimation he was held in by his Country. In the Administration of Governor Shirley, he received a Commission in the Year 1754, constituting him a Justice of the Peace and of the Quorum for the County of Worcester, in which Office, enlarged afterwards to extend throughout the State, he continued during Life.

In the last War, when a general Apprehension prevailed that the Enemy intended an Invasion of the Country by Way of Crown-Point and Lake-Champlain, he received another Commission from Governor Shirley, dated September 20, 1756, appointing him a Major of the Forces raised on that Emergency, under the Command of Major-General Winslow.

Of a Genius and Temper of Mind calculated for political Life, he was, by the unsolicited Suffrages of a free People, at the Election in

May

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May 1774, chosen a Member of the Governor's Council.—But as he had been one of the memorable NINETY-Two, so greatly celebrated, who refused *to rescind* the Vote for the circular Letter, and had always in the General Assembly, and their Committees, of which he was often a Member, opposed the Measures of *Bernard* and *Hutchinson* for abridging the Liberties of the Country, General *Gage*, who was that Year Governor, did him the Honor to negative the Choice.

The General Assembly being dissolved, in Consequence of the Disputes with *Britain*, he then appeared an active Member of the several Provincial Congresses, and at the very Time when Hostilities commenced, was one of a Committee then attending the General Assembly of *Connecticut*, to solicit their Assistance in case such an Event should take Place; and was the following Summer upon another important Committee at *Ticonderoga*.

Fully persuaded of the Justice of the *American* Cause, he embarked and persevered in it to the last with a *Roman* Intrepidity, always expressing the fullest Assurance that *America* would finally be crowned with glorious Success. Ready in the most difficult Times to serve his Country, he was chosen by the People, and acted for some Time, as a Colonel of a Regiment at the Commencement of Hostilities, before a regular Government was established. In the most gloomy Periods, when *Howe* triumphed in the *Jersies*, and *Burgoyne* gasconaded

in

A P P E N D I X.

in the North, he was never heard to drop a desponding Syllable.

At the First General Assembly after the War commenced, held in July 1775, he was elected and appointed a Member of the Supreme Council, and served as such during that memorable Year. Being appointed Judge of Probate of Wills, &c. for the County of Worcester, and the next May commissioned as a Justice of the honorable Superior Court, he resigned his Seat at the Council Board at the next Election.

Solicited by the People of Brookfield to serve as their Delegate in the Grand Convention, held at Cambridge the Beginning of last Month, for the sole Purpose of forming a Constitution or Mode of Government, he attended that highly important Business, and was there appointed a Member of the Committee selected for drafting a Constitution or Form of Government, to be reported to the Convention on the 28th Instant. His unremitting Assiduity in this arduous Task, added to a Debility of Body, occasioned by a constant Application to public Business, served to impair and destroy his Health, and produced a Fever of the bilious or putrid Kind, which put a Period to his valuable Life, just at the Close of the 53d Year of his Age.

Judge Foster was greatly confided in by this State.—His Integrity of Conduct—his extensive Benevolence—his Zeal for the public Good —his Impartiality in the Seat of Justice—his Fortitude in the Hour of Adversity, and his Perseverance

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Perseverance in the general Practice of the Virtues of public and private Life, established his Character as a firm and steady Patriot, a judicious and able Statesman, an upright and impartial Judge, and as a worthy and respectable Member of Society. But we must leave it to the Pages of History to exhibit those Actions which will further illustrate his Character, and shew the Propriety of the general Lamentation for the Loss sustained by the Public, as well as his Family and particular Friends, in his Death.



ХИДИЗЧА

Particulars in the Report of the
Committee on the Population of the
United States, in the year 1850, show
that the population of the United States
was 23,191,851, and the number of
slaves 3,953,760, or 17.1 per cent.
The slaves were distributed among
the states as follows:—

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